

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03  
INR-10 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03  
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO USDA FAS WASHDC  
SECSTATE WASHDC 7878  
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMEMBASSY LONDON

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USDAO FOR FAS/FCA/ESCS/SCHOONOVER

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, UR  
SUBJECT: LOUIS ARTICLE ON SOVIET PRIVATE AGRICULTURE

REF: LONDON 2183

1. THE SUMMARY: THE LOUIS ARTICLE, WE CAN ONLY ASSUME, PERTAINS TO THE PRIVATE FARM AND GARDEN PLOTS AND RECENT SOVIET POLICY SHIFTS REGARDING THEIR CONTINUED NEED AND SUPPORT. HE EXAGGERATES THE SCOPE OF THE POLICY CHANGE AND MEASURES TO BE INTRODUCED. (THE AVERAGE SIZE OF THESE PRIVATE PLOTS SLIGHTLY LESS THAN AN ACRE). ALTHOUGH FAR FROM RETURNING TO PRIVATE AGRICULTURE, THIS CHANGE OF PAST POLICY, WHICH COULD BE TERMED MALEVOLENT NEGLECT, MUST BE A BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW FOR SOVIET ESTABLISHMENT. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN BRIEF, SITUATION IS AS FOLLOWS. FAVORABLE STATEMENTS ON SUBJECT OF PRIVATE PLOTS WERE RESUMED DURING 1975 25TH CP CONGRESS IN AFTERMATH OF DISASTEROUS GRAIN CROP THAT YEAR. NEXT, BREZHNEV IN OCTOBER PLENUM (1976) OF CPSU CC WHEN MEAT SHORTAGES FACED THE COUNTRY SAID "...THE CURTAILMENT OF AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT ON PRIVATE SUBSIDIARY PLOTS OF KOLKHOZ WORKERS, AND OFFICE WORKERS ...IS PRE-

MATURE ..." IN 1977 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES WERE INTRODUCED WHICH A) BROADENED ENTITLEMENT OF PLOTS TO "CITIZENS" INSTEAD OF JUST KOLKHOZ MEMBERS; B) SPECIFICALLY PROVIDED FOR THE FIRST TIME FOR ANIMAL HUSBANDRY; BUT ALSO C) PUT PRIVATE PLOTS ON A PERMISSIVE BASIS INSTEAD OF A "RIGHT"; AND D) STIPULATED THAT ALL USE OF PLOTS WAS SUBJECT TO REGULATION. THE MODEL KOLKHOZ CHARTER HAS IN PAST CONTAINED REGULATIONS FOR SUCH LAND USE. THERE HAS BEEN NO AMENDMENT TO DATE IN THIS CHARTER. WE ANTICIPATE THAT SUCH AMENDMENTS WILL TAKE TIME AND REQUIRE PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

3. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, SOVIETS HAVE NOT ISSUED ANY RESOLUTIONS OR DECREES ON SUBJECT AT NATIONAL LEVEL. THE SOURCE OF THE LOUIS STORY WAS PROBABLY A RECENT ARTICLE IN TRUD. A NUMBER OF PRESS ARTICLES AT A HIGHER LEVEL THAN IN 1976 AND EARLY IN 1977 HAVE ALSO BEEN NOTED RECENTLY. THESE ARTICLES CONTAIN EXPANDED RHETORIC ON BOTH THE REASONS FOR THE CONTINUED PLACE IN THE SYSTEM FOR SUCH PRIVATE AGRICULTURE AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PLOT OPERATORS COULD BE SUPPORTED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES. DEFINITE POLICY CHANGE FROM PAST LIP SERVICE TO THE NEED FOR PRIVATE PLOTS MAINLY IN PAST PERIODS OF FOOD CRISIS IS THEREFORE INDICATED. TO DATE WE HAVE SEEN NO REPEAT NO DISCUSSION OF EXPENDING STATE CAPITAL FUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE. HOW FAR THE SOVIETS CAN AND WILL GO IN IMPLEMENTATING PROGRAMS WHICH WILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACTUALLY STIMULATE SUCH PRODUCTION IS NOT YET PREDICTABLE. SOME BENEFIT, HOWEVER, IS CERTAIN TO FLOW TO THESE PLOTS FROM KOLKHOZES AND SOVKHOZES, SIMPLY FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND POLICY STATEMENTS ALREADY MADE PRIMARILY IN THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR. WHAT WILL NOT HAPPEN, WE ARE CERTAIN, IS A REPEAT OF THE POLISH EXAMPLE OF THE REVITALIZATION OF PRIVATE AGRICULTURE IN THE EARLY 1970S.

4. POST IS IN PROCESS OF PREPARING ANNUAL REPORT ON SOVIET AGRICULTURE WHICH WILL CONTAIN REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF MAJOR POLICY DEVELOPMENTS DURING 1977, INCLUDING FURTHER COMMENT ON THIS SUBJECT. MATLOCK

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Concepts:** AGRICULTURE, PRESS COMMENTS, AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, POLICIES, AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS  
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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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